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Biden Administration Finalizes Weak Auto Emission Standards

Rules With Slow Pollution Cuts, Loopholes Fail to Meet Climate Demands

WASHINGTON— The Biden administration finalized new auto emission [rules](#) today that improve on those [proposed](#) in August but still fail to cut climate pollution fast enough to confront the climate emergency.

The rules for model years 2023 to 2026 fall short of the climate pollution cuts needed to rein in the country’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Biden yielded to automakers with loopholes that allow them to keep producing polluting cars, pickups and SUVs. Automakers get maximum credits for producing minimal numbers of electric vehicles and incorporating other technologies, most of which don’t improve emissions. For example, they allow auto companies to make more gas guzzlers if they add technologies like car-roof solar panels and high efficiency headlights, even though many of the changes don’t significantly improve emissions.

“These rules are little more than a speed bump on the road to climate catastrophe, when the president needed to make a U-turn,” said Dan Becker, director of the [Safe Climate Transport Campaign](#) at the [Center for Biological Diversity](#). “Storms, wildfires and heatwaves have grown far worse over the past decade, so auto pollution rules must be far stronger. These aren’t.”

With U.N. climate talks in Glasgow failing to secure major greenhouse gas reductions and the Senate refusing to cut power plant pollution, the weak auto rules represent a missed opportunity for dramatic climate action.

The administration relies on voluntary, unenforceable promises from automakers to make up to 50% of their fleets electric by 2030. Automakers have promised to produce lots of electric vehicles. Yet the EPA reports that [only 2% of new vehicles](#) produced in 2020 were EVs.

“The next rules must force automakers to actually deliver electric vehicles, rather than just churning out promises to make them,” said Becker.

Before the end of this term, the Biden administration must issue long-term standards that will start after these rules end in 2026.

“The president’s next auto rules must be as aggressive as possible as early as possible to make fast progress in case an anti-environment administration rolls back the longer-term standard as Trump did, blocking further climate progress,” said Becker.

Becker expressed disappointment that the administration failed to strengthen the rules significantly until 2025.

“This plan minimizes auto company whining rather than maximizing the fight against global warming,” said Becker.



Photo of traffic in Miami available for media use as public domain. [Image is available for media use.](#)

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